



LONG STORY SHORT

A Year through the Bible

Reflection Guide

A Kingdom Torn in Two 1 Kings 12–16

Exploring the Story, Chapter 14

The realm united under David and expanded under Solomon now has split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. God's promise of land made so long ago is threatened as we see the far-reaching effects of the unfaithfulness of Israel's kings.

MONDAY

Read: 1 Kings 12

Reflect: Once again, God's promise is threatened. Jeroboam steers the northern tribes of Israel towards idolatry, and the kingdom united under David is torn apart. Thinking back on what you have read over the past months, of what parts of Israel's history does this story remind you? What might be significant about parts of Israel's history repeating? What, if anything, do you learn about God in this story?

Respond: Consider your own faith journey. What themes, if any, keep repeating, and what does that show you about God and yourself?

TUESDAY

Read: 1 Kings 13

Reflect: Idolatry and disobedience continue to be the biggest problems in Israel's relationship with God. Worshipping somewhere other than where God can be found is idolatrous and pointless because it forces God to fit into our own human categories. It makes worship about changing God rather than changing us. Do you find it comforting or challenging to know that worship is about changing us, not God? Why? In what ways, if at all have you been changed by worship?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to change you through the practice of worship.

WEDNESDAY

Read: 1 Kings 14:1–20

Reflect: Jeroboam's failures don't just affect him; they affect people all around him, even affecting Israel as a whole. Sin often has consequences that go far beyond what we would predict. When, if ever, have you been surprised how mistakes you made affected others? What specifically surprised you? Do you tend to underestimate the effect your sins have on others? Why or why not?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to open your eyes to the ways your brokenness affects others. What could you do to bring healing to those you may have harmed?

THURSDAY

Read: 1 Kings 14:21–31

Reflect: A failure to worship God properly and disobedience of God's law introduce chaos to the rest of Israel and Judah's life. Egypt attacks Judah and ransacks the temple. The kings of Judah and Israel are constantly at war. When your spiritual life is not properly centered, what other effects, if any, do you notice? What, if anything, helps keep your spiritual life properly centered on God?

Respond: In prayer, ask for help in keeping your spiritual life firmly rooted and anchored in God.

FRIDAY

Read: 1 Kings 15

Reflect: For all the political maneuvering in Israel and Judah, one thing is clear: God is in control. Notice also that God chooses to be limited by God's own promises. God keeps a descendant of David on the throne of Judah because of the promises God made to David. Read verse 4. What do you think it means for David's descendants "shine like a lamp"? Do you find it comforting or concerning that someone who is a bad king could "shine like a lamp"? Why?

Respond: Consider your own faith journey. How has your life "shined like a lamp"?

SATURDAY

Read: 1 Kings 16:1–14

Reflect: God is angry with Baasha not only because the king himself is unfaithful, but because he has led the people of Israel to be unfaithful as well. The king is responsible and accountable for himself and for the people at large. What does this story tell you about the kind of leaders that God desires? What similarities, if any, exist between the kind of king God desires and God's own character?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to mold your character to become more and more like Jesus. Ask God to help your life show others the love, grace, and faithfulness of God.

SUNDAY

Read: 1 Kings 16:15–34

Reflect: Not only does king Ahab marry a foreigner, but with the rebuilding of Jericho, the conquest of the promised land is slowly being undone. The people are forgetting God's past saving acts, God's Law, and God's promises. What role, if any, does memory play in your own spiritual life? Why do you think it is so easy to slip into "spiritual amnesia"?

Respond: In worship this morning, ask for God to improve your spiritual mem

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